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Political Documents and Bureaucratic Entrepreneurs: Lobbying the European Parliament during Turkey's EU Integration

The European Union's (EU) accession negotiations with Turkey attract a lot of attention from all over Europe to the European Parliament, which serves as a modern agora wherein interests, information, and influence frequently exchange hands. Fine negotiations over what is important to European publics and powerful interests in and outside of the EU are revealed in amendments to sequential drafts of parliamentary reports; these take place through formal and informal communicative channels via lobbying. Complementing ethnographic observations with analysis of EU documents at different stages, I argue that political documents are a means for and contribute largely to bureaucratic politics in both the EU and Turkey, and actors increasingly rely on them to sustain communication between otherwise reluctant parties while maintaining an enduring demand for their expertise. [bureaucratic politics, documents, European Parliament, lobbying, Turkey]

The massive building in Brussels that currently houses the European Parliament (hereafter EP or the Parliament) is a web of concrete, glass, and wire navigable through long corridors that connect its numerous meeting salons. It is within this labyrinth that the diverse interests of various publics strive to gain representation in a common European framework. Members of the EP (hereafter, MEPs or members) negotiate their constituencies' interests directly (face-to-face) or indirectly. Their assistants and advisors, political group and committee secretariats, and interest representatives and lobbyists help members in their negotiations before, during, and after the parliamentary meetings of political groups and committees. One may find them talking quietly or heatedly along the Parliament's corridors and in each other's offices. Lobbyists may busy themselves at the EP cafeterias or at the outside restaurants and cafés surrounding the famous Place Luxembourg. Over lunch, dinner, or coffee, through e-mails, personal chats, or official appointments, MEPs communicate competing policy intentions, interests, acts, and actions through parliamentary channels in this highly bureaucratized environment.

Lobbying is vital for the overall decision- and policymaking processes in Europe. The Parliament considers:

[All activities are lobbying if they are] carried out with the objective of directly or indirectly influencing the formulation or implementation of policy and the decision-making processes of the EU institutions, [including] contacting Members, officials or other staff of the EU institutions; preparing, circulating and communicating letters, information material or discussion papers and position papers; and organizing events, meetings or promotional activities and social events or conferences, invitations to which have been sent to Members, officials or other staff. (European Parliament 2014, 179)

In in-between spaces and times, private individuals working for a fee, NGOs, or public officials from within and outside the EU form and inform the MEPs' striking of elaborate deals with regionwide effects, be they traffic rules (McDonald-Walker 2000) or employment policies (Muntigl, Rice, and Wodak 2000).

Those who lobby the Parliament act as human contacts while they channel information, influence, and interests through this EU institution. Echoing Weber ([1921–1922] 1978, 957), those in need of compromise often find materiality in documents such as the reports and opinions that the members draft. Lobbying plays a vital role in the production and dissemination of the EP documents. These documents exhibit the finesse of complex negotiations that turn the Parliament—otherwise highly securitized and difficult to penetrate from outside by commoners—to a big, encapsulated agora wherein interests, information, and influence frequently exchange hands (Abélès 1992, 140).

Accession negotiations with Turkey in the context of the enlargement of the European Union (hereafter, EU or the Union) attract a lot of such exchanges from all over Europe. Turkey has been an EU candidate since 1999 and officially began membership talks with the Union in late 2005. Although the European Commission (hereafter, EC or the Commission) initiates the terms and conditions of the Turkish membership, the Parliament remains at the center. It closely follows Turkey's democratization performance and progress in instituting EU reforms. Its annual reports on political and policy matters constitute the bulk of this work. Initially, the Parliament reviewed Turkey's democratic performance on its own initiative and independent from the accession process. After the Turkish candidacy, such reports became a regular means to assess the country's reform performance. Open and yet opaque, the actual parliamentary work of negotiation and compromise over the Turkish bid is "inscribed" in sequential drafts of these documents.

In this article, I take the Parliament's textual repository on Turkey as a site and medium where EU actors and their Turkish counterparts negotiate interests invested in (or disinvested from) Turkey's bid for EU membership. I follow the Parliament's annual Turkey Reports (hereafter, EPTRs, preceded by "d" for draft) as they exchange hands between actors through policymaking processes and institutional structures embodied by the EP. My argument is that political documents greatly contribute to bureaucratic politics in both the EU and Turkey. Those who draft, circulate, or influence their writing increasingly rely on them to sustain communication between otherwise reluctant parties. In return, political documents serve as the very means through which actors maintain an enduring demand for their expertise. This human contact ultimately reveals complex negotiations over what matters most, for whom, and to what end in Europe's encouragement (or barring) of Turkish membership.

Historically, Turkish governing elites viewed the Parliament's self-initiated (and often critical) opinions as interference in their domestic affairs. Each report caused public backlash with heightened nationalist undertones. Turkish political and bureaucratic actors stoke public outcry against the EP by deprecating its reports in the media: a Turkish politician once threw one into the trash; others proclaimed that the EP had become "overtly politicized" (Tisdall 2012). They often recommend that the Parliament adopt a constructive attitude toward Turkey by looking at its good and bad deeds together: a bit more praising and a bit less badmouthing, or "positive pedagogy," as I call it here. They communicate such recommendations to EP counterparts through bureaucratic entrepreneurship and lobbying.

During fifteen months of fieldwork in Brussels at a time when the EU–Turkey membership talks collapsed into a death spiral, I often observed actors and agents resolve contention among competing interests only when they were able to tame political interests by technical will (see Firat 2014). Nit-picking by parliamentary and extra-parliamentary actors over the

use of terms such as “accession” (in the EP documents that I analyze here) reflects this tension and ultimately actors’ differences over the Turkish membership. My interlocutors often tried to make political issues into “technical” ones by enhanced bureaucratic politics.

“Bureaucratic politics” refers to governmental offices, organs, or agents that act “quasi-autonomous[ly] with own purposive and reflexive goals” (Radaelli 1999, 38). In such politics, actors rely on their pool of expertise and tactical maneuvers, or their bureaucratic entrepreneurship (Page 1997, 154). Their primary concern is “enhancing the power and prestige (or at a minimum the survival) of the organization itself” (Peters 1992, 116). The main problem with bureaucratic politics is that it is self-serving and “the outcome of discussions might bear little relationship to publicly expressed preferences during policy processes” (Page and Wouters 1994, 446). Both the EP’s work on Turkey and the responses it triggers among the Turkish elites, I argue, contribute to bureaucratic politics. I investigate this here by means of a hybrid methodology, including ethnographic observation of policymaking processes with people and artifacts at the center, elite interviews, and textual analysis of policy advice.

Documents are codifications of human intent, products of human interactions, and, in cases such as the EPTRs, also the objective of such interactions. According to Latour (1988, 26), anthropology has long mistreated files and records as “the most despised of all ethnographic objects” (see also Riles 2006). Several reasons could account for that. According to critics, documents are “unconscious maps of the mundane” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, 36; see also Harper 1998, 13) that reflect routinized actions. Meeting reports, for example, “are born in the work of staff and the recommendations of committees, circulate among and are given specific substance by individual[s], and go on to figure centrally in the decisions made at other meetings” (Brenneis 2006, 42). Critics also question whether the textual meanings of documents are available to, accessible by, or even relevant to outsiders to the group, which produces, uses, and circulates them. The mere existence of a particular policy document, they argue, may further mislead in presupposing the need for action in a policy area (see Ferguson 1990). Finally, critics observe that a great deal of social life does not appear in textual documents that, unlike human interlocutors, do not readily communicate with the ethnographer (Riles 2006, 12)—notwithstanding the fact that what people say is often very different from what they do (Hodder 1994, 395; Yurchak 2006).

Despite the long-term privileging of people-to-people interactions over the artifacts of human interaction, cultural anthropologists have only recently begun to appreciate documents in this double presence. This burgeoning scholarship has examined the form and aesthetics of documents, such as internal bureaucratic communiqués and international agreements (Gupta 2012; Hull 2012b; Riles 2000); their affective states as in travel documents (Navaro-Yashin 2007, 2012); and their associative qualities through which political authorities relate to their subjects as in land titles, identification cards, and transparency documents (Gupta 2012; Ballesteros 2012; Hetherington 2011; Höhn 2013; Jacob and Riles 2007; Jeganathan 2004; Lund 2001; see Hull 2012a for a review).

Some documents, such as the grant assessment forms examined by Brenneis (2006) or the drafts of parliamentary reports that I analyze here, are specifically designed to become mundane, especially if seen from inside the institutional setting in which they come into existence. Once their “careers” (Harper 1998), “life histories” (Appadurai 1986, 41), or “social lives” (Appadurai 1986), are over, their relevance retreats to archives (Harper 1998, 12). In Hodder’s (1994) terms, they become *inactive*. But mundanity, I would argue, does not mean that documents are mute, inaccessible, or misleading. Reading through

multiple drafts of EPTRs under preparation proves that such documents reflect competing interests animated by Turkey's European integration. These interests are accessible in amendments initiated and circulated by a variety of actors. When looked at from an emic perspective, they constitute institutional communication between the EU and Turkey. Here I pursue these political documents as artifacts-under-production-while-in-exchange because they provide a lens refracting power and interest relations between the Turkish and EU actors.

Like Appadurai (1986, 5), I take this artifact analysis as complementary to ethnographers' observations of socio-political and material encounters between actors from Turkey, EU member states, and the EP, as well as methodologically necessary. Lobbying is the contemporary form of political communication of diverse interests. It also fosters bureaucratic encounters of a political nature with enduring aftereffects. Political communication in advanced bureaucracies such as the EU commonly takes place on paper. As mundane objects of politicking and policymaking, these documents provide privileged access to what matters most today to those who manage Turkey-EU affairs. Yet, they must first be situated within the larger socio-cultural context throughout which their human trans-actors operate. This is because bureaucracies, be they national or supranational, are first and foremost social institutions, and "an understanding of bureaucratic work requires the analysis of social relationships between officials, between officials and clients, and of more inclusive social fields within which contacts and relationships are played out" (Handelman 1978, 9).

"And Now the Turkish Delights!"

The above quote was by the chairman as he introduced the vote on the dEPTR during a Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) meeting on February 11, 2009. The AFET is the largest and long-standing parliamentary committee that deals with the EU enlargement and the accession of potential or prospective members, including Turkey.¹ Christian Democrats, the largest political group in the Parliament since the 2000s, usually chairs this important committee. Until recent elections, the Turkey *rappporteur* also came from this political group. Committee members chose one from among their "not-so-radical" members, in order not to jeopardize relations with Turkey; the rapporteur always came from an EU member state known for strong opposition to Turkish membership (interview with AFET's Turkey advisor, October 22, 2008). Turkish diplomats often did their best to influence the choice of the AFET rapporteur and lobbied to block the candidacy of members known to be particularly unsympathetic to Turkey (personal conversation with a Turkish diplomat, July 4, 2009).

I observed AFET meetings between 2008 and 2009, during which time the rapporteur opened for the members' deliberation the draft of Turkey's ten- to twelve-page reports from 2007 and 2008. At that time, the AFET's Turkey rapporteur, a Dutch MEP from the Christian Democrats, had freshly assumed the task. Possibly the most successful rapporteur in the Parliament's history, she drafted seven EPTRs uninterruptedly from 2008 to 2014.

During meetings when a draft report was up for debate, the meeting room was overflowing with the following constituencies:

- MEPs who were also AFET members and their assistants
- Political group secretariats and their country advisers
- European Commission officials from the Directorate General Enlargement
- High-level diplomats from the Turkish delegation to the EU
- Representatives of Turkish private interests in Brussels

- Journalists, and
- Anyone else who was curious about the Turkey–EU affairs or who simply wanted to watch a heated debate

Turkish public and private interest representatives also attended these meetings in large numbers. However, they would enter the room only when the AFET debate loomed nearer to the draft Turkey report. Diplomats had reserved seats at the back of the room, and private interest representatives sat in visitors' rows away from the diplomats.

Distancing themselves from one another in front of EU actors, they tried to obscure public–private interest coordination when, in reality, such boundaries were highly confused. In each AFET meeting I observed, the minute the chairman ended the debate by announcing the next issue on the agenda, the meeting room cleared out as quickly as it had filled.

First meetings on the draft Turkey report always close with the rapporteur's introduction of the deadline for tabling amendments, usually within one month's time. Until voted on in the next meeting, intense negotiations over amendments begin between members' offices, with regulars making frequent amendments. In recent years, of all EP reports, those on enlargement and individual candidate countries received the highest number of amendments, and the Turkey reports received the most among all AFET reports. In fact, "Turkey" commonly attracts more attention than any other subject on the Parliament's agenda. Each amendment reflects different interests invested in (or divested from) Turkey's EU accession.

After the deadline, the rapporteur assembled amendments and constructed her compromises. Here is how her parliamentary assistant, who often drafted the main text of these reports, put the arithmetic of compromise to me: "Opposite amendments cancel each other out; even though in the end the actual wording might not make any sense, the remaining amendments are put together" (interview, April 22, 2009). The rapporteur then edited the report one last time. At the next meeting, the compromises were voted on one by one, each in a few seconds. MEPs kept their eyes on the electronic tally board and their ears on the chairperson. Their assistants walked around with lists, putting pluses against each accepted amendment and a minus for each rejected one. At the end of the vote, sighs and clapping filled the meeting room. Some members hugged and congratulated each other for the good work they did. Some shared the good news with their Turkish colleagues by shaking their hands. Others began drawing up critical accounts of which alliances failed, for future reference; still others accepted defeat with mute disappointment. It usually took five months for the Parliament to adopt a report. During this time, other parliamentary committees also submitted opinions. The rapporteur's political skills in compromising between political groups, parliamentary committees, and other interested parties determined how long a report takes to finish. What compromise means, of course, is always historical and contextual (see Abélès and Bellier 1996).

A small but significant group of MEPs of Turkish origin, but with varying ethnic and religious backgrounds (e.g., Kurdish, Sunni Muslim, Alevi), has always been instrumental to the communication of interests and the negotiation of compromises within the Parliament. During the sixth legislature, when I conducted my fieldwork, there were five members of Turkish origin—the highest number in the EP's history.² They commonly chose their assistants and secretaries from people also of Turkish origin. Problematically, all risked being identified by their origin (as "Turkish") and not by the larger European constituencies that elected them. During one interview, a parliamentary assistant of a member of Turkish origin confided in me that his boss had lonely moments because country colleagues considered her "a Turk," while Turkish officials in Brussels dismissed her as "a European" (interview,

April 22, 2009). A Kurdish lobbyist told me that his organization tried to avoid another MEP because of her identification as “a Kurd,” which he considered a disadvantage when other members saw her agenda as too narrowly focused on one ethnic minority in one EU member state. Instead, he concentrated on lobbying other non-Turkish or non-Kurdish members (interview, March 17, 2009).

Some of these MEPs struggled to build a political agenda beyond the “Turkish issue,” while others resorted to self-defense. Another assistant described her boss as a missionary who advocates “for Turkey in Europe” and for a “Turkey despite itself.” She explained the everyday dilemma her Turkish-German-European self and her MEP faced: “I have had things to criticize. But if you are *one of the four* [Turkey-origin MEPs], you don’t criticize that much. You adopt a political behavior” (interview with, March 13, 2009; emphasis added: she excluded the Kurdish member from the group of five). Her boss’s political behavior often amounted to relaying the Turkish “official line” by way of amendments, for which the Turkey rapporteur and others frequently criticized him.

Turkish state and government officials in Brussels and Ankara often test these members by the same measure: by scrutinizing their willingness to demonstrate loyalty to the Turkish government. As a result, government representatives lobby only those who pass the loyalty test and keep others at a distance. Nevertheless, this group of MEPs constitute first contacts for anyone wanting to lobby the EP on Turkey from the outside, including Turkish private interest representatives. In return, whether these members are on good working terms with different societal and political groups from Turkey (including the Turkish government) and whether they are able to communicate difficult issues to Turkish counterparts affect their standing and role in Turkey’s EU integration process.

Political Documents: Nit-Picking over “Accession”

It is not news that the Parliament’s reports are essentially “political documents” (de Lobkowicz 2001; Muntigl, Rice, and Wodak 2000). Their length, the contention they generate, and the parties involved in their production are indicative of their significance. The most important indicator is the high number of amendments they receive each year: 262 in 2008; 188 in 2009; 243 in 2010; 315 in 2011; 461 in 2012; 415 in 2013; 338 in 2014; 442 in 2015; and 331 in 2016. In this section, I analyze the dEPTRs and the political, bureaucratic process through which they are drafted. The documents themselves and the amendment process aptly manifest political conventions peculiar to the anti-case of Turkey’s bid for EU membership and what the Parliament does about it.

Each year the members propose amendments that vary according to concerns they represent and the interests of those who lobby them. By way of parliamentary amendments, some groups struggle to mold Turkey’s EU accession into an “open-ended” process whose results cannot be guaranteed beforehand. Others mobilize in order to secure the final result of negotiations with “accession,” or full membership, however that might occur. Wodak (2009) has called attention to the ways in which the wording on paper reflects and frames EU policy options.

[Documents produced within the EU’s institutional confines] manifest certain rules and expectations according to social conventions, and ha[ve] specific functions in a discourse community and its related community of practice. The proposal itself follows certain textual devices; the contents follow an ideology or program put forward by a specific political group. (Wodak 2009, 40)

Accordingly, year after year, members propose many amendments regarding the use (or non-use) of the word accession. This suggests that, after a decade into membership talks, the Turkish bid remains as contentious as ever. Because of this contention, it becomes all the more symbolically significant whether Turkey's EU membership remains "potential" or moves forward toward becoming "prospective." Therefore, the presence or absence of "accession" is most critical. As I discuss later, the struggle between those who push "accession" into EP reports or pull it out contributes to the bureaucratic politics prevalent among actors on both sides of Turkey's EU accession.

During negotiations of the 2008 dEPTR, a group of MEPs questioned the rapporteur's alleged attempt to deprive Turkey–EU relations of integrity by failing to use the word "accession". Noting her non-use of the word in framing Turkey–EU affairs, they proposed amendments to the contrary. This was, indeed, the first time this omission had occurred in the EP's textual repository regarding Turkish membership. Seven members (five Socialists and two Liberal-Democrats) jointly submitted the first amendment that read as follows:³

Draft motion for a resolution

– having regard to the Negotiating Framework for Turkey of 3 October 2005,

Amendment

– having regard to the Negotiating Framework for ***Turkey's EU accession*** of 3 October 2005.

A majority of AFET members rejected this amendment during their subsequent meeting and their behavior raised concerns among Turkish governmental representatives. Murmuring about the EP's earlier strong support when Turkey was declared a candidate for EU membership and later when membership talks were officially opened, Turkish representatives began doubting their EP counterparts' commitment to Turkey's EU bid. In anticipation of rejection, however, these same MEPs raised this issue seven more times, with further amendments to the ensuing articles of the dEPTR, including the following:

Draft motion for a resolution

A. whereas negotiations with Turkey were opened on 3 October 2005 after approval by the Council of the Negotiating Framework, and whereas the ***opening of those*** negotiations is ***the starting-point for a long-lasting and*** open-ended process,

Amendment

A. whereas negotiations with Turkey were opened on 3 October 2005 after approval by the Council of the Negotiating Framework, and whereas the ***shared objective of the*** negotiations is ***accession; whereas negotiations are an*** open-ended process ***the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed in advance,***

In response, the Christian Democrats proposed in an amendment that the process with Turkey be an open-ended process that should (at best) "strengthen economic, political and human ties of the EU with Turkey." The Turkey advisor of the Socialist group explained to me what had by then become a regular practice: "Each year the rapporteur uses 'negotiation,' to which our [Socialist] MEPs respond with numerous amendments to qualify this with

‘accession’” (interview, February 19, 2009). Indeed, Socialist members, together with Liberal-Democrats, submitted four more similar amendments.

The rapporteur used “accession” in her first Turkey report for 2007, but her political group, the Christian Democrats, became more vocal in its opposition to Turkey’s EU accession over time in the Parliament. After many amendments to her omission of “accession” in the 2008 draft report, the rapporteur finally agreed to the use of the word in her final report. At this time she also introduced a compromise by changing the wording of this article in her draft report as follows:

A. whereas accession negotiations with Turkey were opened on 3 October 2005 after approval by the Council of the Negotiating Framework, and whereas the opening of those negotiations **was** [my emphasis] the starting-point for a long-lasting and open-ended process,

Although the rapporteur acceded to a compromise, she did something else: whether it was simply missed or ignored by many well-trained eyes, the rapporteur used her bureaucratic entrepreneurship and switched to past tense. Although none of her fellow members had proposed an amendment to that end, she had, on her own, introduced this compromise by placing the opening of accession negotiations in the past tense. According to the rapporteur, the time when membership talks were opened with Turkey was by then *passé*, and that perhaps not the terms of membership but clearly the positive perception of the Turkish bid in the EP had changed. This article was subsequently kept intact in the final EPTR, with the rapporteur’s use of accession as the qualifier of negotiations and her use of past tense in which she placed them.

Members objected to the rapporteur’s iteration of accession negotiations as a “long-lasting and open-ended process” in her 2009 dEPTR with many amendments. While some demanded that this be deleted in its entirety, opponents requested a clear reference to the EU conditionality. EU conditionality refers to the European Union’s capacity to take in new members. Opponents of Turkish membership used it as a benchmark in order to drag out the accession process because the EU may never be ready for Turkey. The Socialists and Liberal-Democrats once more took up the fight with members from Central and Eastern European countries, submitting the majority of amendments to benchmarking Turkey’s accession with EU conditionality. Concerned that their amendments might otherwise not carry, they agreed ahead of the vote to a reference on some sort of conditionality. Some members proposed amendments following the second clause of the recital:

- “whereas the opening of those negotiations was the starting-point for” was amended to “*negotiation process with the objective of Turkey’s EU membership once the membership criteria are fulfilled*,”
- “a long-lasting and open-ended process with the purpose of EU membership, provided that Turkey meets the criteria,” was amended to “a long-lasting and open-ended process, *with the common goal of full EU membership as soon as the membership criteria are fulfilled*.”

No amendments were accepted and the article was adopted intact. Even so, many Socialist and Liberal-Democrat members proposed new amendments with similar content in the following sections of the draft report.

In her subsequent dEPTRs, the rapporteur went back to her use of present tense. In 2011 the Commission had reinvigorated accession talks with Turkey. The rapporteur’s return to present tense in her 2010 dEPTR was seemingly because the Commission had lobbied

her office on this matter. In fact, the Commission often tries to influence the content of the rapporteur's reports, mostly in order to make Turkey better comply with accession requirements communicated through the EPTRs. Her use of the present tense might have also been an effort to zero in on Turkey's reforms to date. In her 2011 report, the rapporteur continued to reframe accession negotiations as "a starting point for a long-lasting and open-ended process," but this time accession negotiations were to be "based on fair and rigorous conditionality and the commitment to reform." In her 2012 report and her last report of 2013, accession negotiations based on the same conditionality and commitment became a framing construction. Parliamentary elections held the year after changed the composition of the EP. Under the new Socialist-Democrat rapporteur, members continue to negotiate Turkey's EU accession according to how the previous Turkey rapporteur framed it (according to her line of bureaucratic entrepreneurship), attesting to her legacy on Turkey–EU relations.

Bureaucratic Entrepreneurs and Positive Pedagogy

Once the EP adopts a new report, Turkey's Foreign Service in Brussels activates agents to lobby the Parliament for the next one. Indeed, the Parliament is the main target of Turkish lobbying—even though the Commission decides main reform criteria to be met by the Ankara government. Governmental agents come into EP offices with arguments and methods of persuasion that their Eurocratic counterparts sometimes perceive as too direct and inflexible. Some EP administrators even felt "bullied" (interviews with AFET advisor, March 31, 2008, and the Socialist group's Turkey advisor, May 28, 2009). Non-governmental representatives engage with them more carefully. Governmental or not, Turkish agents always lobby specific individuals. They take effective lobbying as a measure of personal success, both theirs and of those they lobby.

Turkish officials have continuously responded to the EPTRs by disseminating their views in official (i.e., the EU–Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee) and informal (e.g., several Friends of Turkey groups) EP platforms. Most directly, the Turkish Foreign Service also prepares texts—with no official signature, letterhead, or logo and known as "non-paper" in international relations-speak—which communicates Turkey's views through the EP corridors. As far as I am aware, no other country agents engage with their EP counterparts in this way.

Every year, high-level bureaucrat(s) draft a new non-paper and send it to AFET's Turkey rapporteur, shadow rapporteurs from political groups other than the rapporteur's group, secretariats of EP committees, MEPs who are also AFET members known to be sympathetic to the Turkish cause, and to the Commission. I had access to two such non-papers in 2008 and 2009; first through my parliamentary interlocutors and later when I interned at a Turkish NGO in Brussels.⁴ The style of writing suggested that these documents carried Turkey's amendments to the dEPTR. Because of the otherwise disguised institutional identity of their author(s), the non-papers are products of bureaucratic entrepreneurship: they embody a techno-political quality wherein members of bureaucratic organizations use tactical knowledge and expertise to circumvent hierarchies embedded in their institutions (Page 1997, 154). Bureaucratic entrepreneurship may be risky, yet many in Turkish bureaucracy practice it. It is especially vital in Turkey–EU relations in which specialization and expertise are in high demand. There is a circular logic to bureaucratic entrepreneurship: it rewards individuals with higher administrative status, more responsibility, and ultimately more power, and bureaucratic entrepreneurs use this power to then consolidate their authority and standing in the organization.

When I asked about the author's identity, everyone gave me the same name—unnamed here for obvious reasons—a familiar figure to those involved in Turkey's EU accession

in Brussels. Having academically studied Turkey–EU relations and having worked in a diplomatic capacity since the late 1980s, he had both a personal and political stake as a career diplomat. When we met for the first time, I had already heard of him from many of my parliamentary interlocutors. Later on, I had many occasions to observe him in action in the EP. He spent much time and energy to influence the preparation of the EPTRs, drinking liters of coffee with members’ assistants, and staff of political groups and committee secretariats; socializing with them outside the Parliament over meals and cocktails; and perhaps at times intimidating them over these reports. Each time I laid eyes on him, he was either handing notes to the Turkey rapporteur during AFET meetings or talking to the members and political group secretariats he cornered right outside the meeting room. This single man took onto himself the arduous task of representing Turkish public interests in the Parliament—not as a monolith but nevertheless at times contradictory, internally competing, counterproductive, or at best ambiguous. Even though Turkish non-papers did not come out of his own initiative, he delivered a certain systematicity to their drafting—not the least by training others in crafting them. His entrepreneurship endured even after he left Brussels for Ankara, from where he continued to oversee the non-papers’ production, always leaving a personal trace in them.

Contrary to his and his colleagues’ expectations, however, lengthy documents, such as the 2008 thirty-two-page non-paper that contained amendment proposals blended with argumentation, opinion, and recommendation, received little attention in the EP offices. A year later, Turkey’s non-papers came closer to the Parliament’s amendment style. It shrank in size to eight pages when its author abandoned lengthy explanations of a proposed amendment or of a conflict’s background. The author’s voice also became less didactic and less authoritative with the use of smaller fonts and fewer words in bold.

Both non-papers I had access to firmly demanded that the rapporteur adopt a rewarding tone regarding Turkey’s reform performance and its active participation in the program (see Firat 2014). Initially, this positive pedagogy drew no objection from the Turkish officials, at least not within their informal submissions to the EPTR. They demanded instead that the EPTRs register more of Turkey’s good deeds than criticisms of bad government behavior. Right on the first page of the 2008 non-paper, under the subheading of “Negative and Discouraging Tone,” the non-paper misdating the dEPTR read as follows:

The draft 2009 [2008] Turkey report employs the term of “regrets” 14 times and “is concerned” 12 times in comparison to 3 and 6 in the 2008 [2007] Final Report. Surely, this negative manner will discourage the reform process and further efforts, which have already been badly affected by external factors. Therefore, this tone which maybe (*sic*) critical, has to be tuned to an encouraging language by replacing most of these negative verbs by rather descriptive and neutral words, since the intention of the Report is to support the reform and accession process.

The author(s) clearly tried to mold the rapporteur’s job by redefining the EPTR as an important means to enhance Turkey’s EU accession. The non-paper further applied a normative framework to the dEPTR’s discourse in addressing Turkey, followed by warnings of negative consequences if those norms were not met.

In the following pages, the author(s) recommended that the rapporteur place EU–Turkey relations in context by referring to them as “accession negotiations,” whose end result is “the shared objective of accession.” Relaying common sentiments to the Turkey rapporteur, a Dutch official who worked at the Netherlands’ official EU representation in Brussels

suggested to me that the question over whether the word “accession” is used in each EU official text (referring to Turkey) diverted significant energy from work on substantive issues (interview, December 12, 2008). For his Turkish counterparts, however, “there are virtually no other facts for the state than those that are contained in documents,” which echoes Scott (1998, 93). Thus, a word once uttered matters most in terms of political symbolism such that the Turkish counterparts consider the non-use of accession as a politically motivated omission by the rapporteur. The former rapporteur must have agreed with this Turkish impression; why else would she insist on not using the word in her draft reports, or switch between present and past tense in her compromises?

The author(s) of the non-paper tried to further mold the on-going negotiation process by proposing to amend the rapporteur’s 2008 words: “Whereas Turkey has committed itself to reforms, good neighborly relations and progressive alignment with the EU, and whereas these efforts should be viewed as an opportunity for Turkey itself to modernize,” by adding “these efforts are both for alignment with European standards or modernization as well as for joining the EU” (2).

The author(s) shifted the blame of Turkey’s poor reform performance away from the government and demanded that the EU “honor its existing commitments toward the countries already in the enlargement process, this being a strong incentive for the countries to continue their reforms” (1). The author(s) argued that progress “has been stalled for reasons of non-technical nature” (3). They did not explicitly describe these reasons as political, but referred to the tacit blockage of accession negotiations by some EU member states (4). They underlined the “continuous slowdown of the reform process” and the statement wherein, on behalf of the Parliament, the rapporteur “calls on the Turkish government to prove its political will to continue the reform process to which it committed itself in 2005” (5). In response, the author argued that this “goes beyond being critical and questions the very will of the Government to continue the reform and accession process” and assured the Parliament that “the Government’s political will remains as solid as it used to be” (5). The non-paper repeatedly demanded that the EP give due diligence, recognition, and credit to the Turkish government for its reform efforts—efforts that may or may not exist but that are open for interpretation and accounting, it argued, only by the Turkish people themselves.

The issues I interpret as elements of positive pedagogy are repeated over and over in both the 2008 and 2009 non-papers. Such continuous emphasis suggests an emerging pattern of bureaucratic entrepreneurship with its own qualities. The authors of both non-papers openly demanded that the rapporteur use “a balanced tone” in the EPTRs. As expected, the author found them balanced when the reports referred equally to good and bad deeds of the government in its accession performance and used a “moderate voice” (*ABHaber* 2010).

Prepared by one or more high-level Turkish bureaucrats between Brussels and Ankara, these non-papers had two concrete effects. First, many proposed amendments found their way into the offices of certain MEPs; a few even found their way into AFET debates verbatim as amendments, such as those regarding the use of accession. Bureaucrats gently called on Turkish interest groups who represented non-governmental, private interests in Brussels to help disseminate views and amendment proposals presented in the non-papers through their parliamentary contacts. Like the members of Turkish origin, this handful of influential people, who represented (for the most part) business interests from Turkey, were reminded that this is a test for effective cooperation between Turkish public and private interest representatives. Some of them certainly took this call as an opportunity to strengthen their relationship with Turkish authorities. Others also used it to capitalize on their ongoing lobbying, especially when they needed to look good to their bosses in Turkey. During one AFET meeting, I sat right behind a Turkish lobbyist and his boss visiting

from Istanbul. Both worked at a long-term business-supported NGO, which was founded in the mid-1960s by Turkish business elites and which maintained a regular representative in Brussels starting in the early 1980s. The Brussels-based representative pointed at a particular amendment on the dEPTR and told his boss, “We put this in here,” meaning that he and his office pushed for that particular amendment to appear in the draft report. Yet, only a few such amendments generated enough support to appear in the final EPTR, mostly proposed by certain Turkey-friendly MEPs who claimed that their amendments were directly instrumental in toning down the sharpness of voice in certain parts of the report. Their Turkish colleagues welcomed this move in their post-report comments.

Second, the Turkish non-papers enabled their author(s)—and those who relayed their positions—to gain more status and promotion, and helped them consolidate their position as “experts.” After his Brussels term, I met with the non-papers’ main author during informal meetings among the Turkish delegation and civil society representatives in Brussels—a showcasing of governmental consultation with some Brussels-based private interest representatives. By then, he had become a special adviser to Turkey’s first EU minister and chief negotiator. As I was leaving Brussels, I heard that he was leading a newly established communications directorate at the EU Ministry in Ankara, whose creation he personally orchestrated. Upon my return to the United States, I met him once more in the lobby of New York City’s Plaza Hotel, where he was staying for a UN conference while accompanying his immediate boss, Turkey’s foreign minister. During our brief talk, he proudly showed me a draft copy of a strategy paper that aimed at systematizing and institutionalizing communication with the EU counterparts. He personally drafted this strategy paper, and with it engineered the creation of a separate unit under the EU Ministry to that end. Referring to the strategy paper, he also told me that he had to “lobby the minister” in order to make it happen (personal communication with a senior diplomat, September 21, 2009).

Senior-level bureaucrats have always held special roles, influence, and leeway in winning over Turkish legislators, especially with regards to EU-related matters (see Keskin 2002). Because expertise gained in the EU-field is somewhat unique and does not transfer easily to other domains of public administration and private sector, these bureaucrats increase their presence and power by enhancing their roles and expertise during negotiations of EU-related matters, in which bureaucratic entrepreneurship comes in especially handy.

Conclusion

Unlike bureaucratic documents that are instruments of policymaking (cf. Hull 2012b), the EPTRs do not fit into the classics of “domination through knowledge” (Weber 1978, 223). They do not inform decision makers in making better policies, compel anybody to take further action—except to get the Parliament’s president to disseminate it among concerned parties. They do not make bureaucrats who they are (cf. Hull 2012b, 253), even though they contribute to professional careers. Moreover, although the drafters of the EPTRs reminisce enthusiastically on their drafting amidst great (both in-house and extra-parliamentary) power struggles and insist that it is important for the Parliament’s records to demonstrate support on any particular issue by precedent, no one essentially cares for past EPTRs. Once adopted, they become mundane and inactive and await iteration in the EP’s textual repository. Why then do EU and Turkish actors spend so much energy to prepare them?

“Writing [serves] to communicate at a distance, to store information, and to tend to depersonalize interaction,” argued Goody (1986, 89–90) about power and modern statecraft. In the EU’s complex policymaking process where actors do not regularly meet face-to-face, material products indeed gain a special communicative value. Representatives of Turkish

and non-Turkish interests help cross bureaucratic and social distances and facilitate the negotiation of politico-cultural forms, codes, and norms during Turkey's European Union membership bid by means of political documents. Unlike Goody, however, in my study of the production of the EPTRs, I found that every bit of these reports is personal to those involved in drafting them. Precisely because such political documents are produced in a negotiated manner, they are also products of enduring socio-political relations. At the same time, they serve as "networking devices" (Preda 2002, 235; Harper 1998), connecting myriad groups of people during their production and dissemination. This is precisely why, from a methodological perspective, one needs to look both *at* documents and *through* them in search of the kinds of interests they may materialize or exclude (see Hull 2012b for a discussion). By following its reports literally in-the-making as they passed from one hand to another through the Parliament's rooms and corridors, in this article I looked at and through the EP's textual repository on Turkey as both ethnographic object and artifact of social relations that were reflected in texts and in real life (Riles 2006, 7).

In this great game of politics at the supranational level, each actor and agent thus served its function. First, the Parliament and its members accomplished their self-initiated and routinized task of evaluating Turkey's progress performance. Second, governmental and private interest representatives from the EU, its member states, and Turkey tried to mold the final reports by lobbying the Parliament at all levels. Third, Turkish public and private interest representatives gave the impression to their bosses in Brussels and Ankara that everything is under control. In this way, they earned recognition, appreciation, and promotion—regardless of actual reform performance. Fourth, and following Das (2004, 250), both the EU and Turkish governmental circles co-constituted one another as collocutors by means of these reports amidst stalling negotiations. Finally, politicians, state officials, and lobbyists from all levels and sides showed that, despite the nonmovements in accession negotiations and the reform process, politics as usual is continuing in Turkey–EU affairs. Concomitantly, they proved the on-going need for their expertise as true politicians and lobbyists in maintaining (good) relations between otherwise reluctant parties to the Turkish bid. This further helped them consolidate their monopoly over representation of interests with which they were initially entrusted, that is, the right to speak for their respective publics, or clientele. Thus, actors from both sides carved further space for themselves in future bureaucratic politics surrounding Turkey's EU membership bid. In the final analysis, this type of politics further bureaucratizes communicative reform relations; deepens the death spiral in which Turkey–EU relations are currently caught up; and eclipses any hope for, meaning of, and future efforts in their democratization.

Notes

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1. The first member of Turkish origin to serve at the Parliament was Leyla Onur, a German national who won a seat on the Social Democratic Party ballot; she served from 1989 to 1994.
2. There were two female and three male members. Three were from Germany (one Socialist, one Green, one Far Left), one from the Netherlands (Socialist), and one from Bulgaria (Liberal-Democrat).

3. Out of convention, all amendment proposals are put in italics and bold until adopted or dismissed. I quote them here in the original.
4. The first report was titled “Comments on the 2009 Draft Report of the European Parliament on Turkey’s 2008 Progress Report” (dated December 1, 2008), and the second was “Turkey’s Comments and Views on the 2010 Draft Report of the European Parliament on Turkey’s 2009 Progress Report and Proposals for Amendments” (dated December 8, 2009). I obtained copies of the first non-paper from an EP administrator, and the second came to my place of internship (a low-caliber NGO) in an e-mail attachment. My Turkish interlocutors and I share citizenship. Even though they (sometimes reluctantly) talked to me about their work, they chose not to disclose written traces of it, perhaps because I was a student of a bizarre discipline for Brussels’s Europolitics, or I was just a citizen to them. Either way, they did not feel publicly accountable to me to otherwise share their work.

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